



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Arkansas*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW ENGLAND MAN JOINED WITH CABOT MAN IN DRUG DISTRIBUTION INDICTMENT

Little Rock - Jane W. Duke, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, and Thomas J. Browne, Special Agent in Charge of the Little Rock Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced today that a federal grand jury has added Ralph Francis Deleo, age 64, of Somerville, Massachusetts, to the pending indictment of George Wylie Thompson, age 64, of Cabot, Arkansas. Pursuant to the superseding indictment, both men are charged with conspiring to possess with intent to distribute, and possessing with intent to distribute, more than 500 grams of cocaine. The superseding indictment also charges each defendant with one count of using a telephone to facilitate a felony drug transaction.

As reported in a November 16, 2009 press release, Thompson was originally apprehended on these and other charges in Bangkok, Thailand. Thompson made an initial appearance in Los Angeles, California on Friday, November 6, 2009 and was returned to the Eastern District of Arkansas in the custody of the United States Marshal Service. Thompson was arraigned on these and other charges before the Honorable Henry L. Jones, Jr. on December 1, 2009. Thompson remains under a temporary order of detention pending a full detention hearing before Judge Jones. That detention hearing is currently scheduled for Thursday, December 3, 2009, at 2:00 p.m.

Deleo was initially arrested in Somerville, Massachusetts on November 16, 2009 on a complaint from the Eastern District of Arkansas. In his initial appearance in the District of Massachusetts, Deleo waived identity and probable cause hearings. He is currently being transported to the Eastern District of Arkansas in the custody of the United States Marshal Service. Once he arrives, he will appear before a magistrate judge for formal arraignment. At that time, a determination will be made regarding his release or continued detention pending trial.

The maximum penalties for possessing with intent to distribute more than 500 grams of cocaine and conspiring to do the same are normally not less than five years and not more than 40 years imprisonment, and a fine of not more than \$2 million. These penalties are applicable to Deleo in the event of conviction. However, in a separate pleading filed today, the United States Attorney's Office gave notice that it intends to seek statutorily-enhanced penalties against Thompson by virtue of his prior convictions. Specifically, the notice states that Thompson had been previously convicted of two separate drug trafficking offenses in Arkansas—one a federal conviction and one a state conviction. As a result of these prior convictions, Thompson faces enhanced penalties of not less than 10 years and not more than life imprisonment and a fine of up to \$4 million. The maximum penalty for using a communication device in a drug crime is not more than four years imprisonment, not more than a \$250,000 fine, and not more than one year of supervised release.

This investigation was conducted by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Arkansas State Police. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Laura G. Hoey.

An indictment contains only allegations. Each defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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